

**DETECTION OF AVIAN LEUCOSIS VIRUS SUBGROUP J IN POULTRY
TISSUE SAMPLES AND THEIR MOLECULAR CHARACTERIZATION**

BY

DR. BALA RAM THAPA CHHETRI

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra
Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Veterinary Science.**

January 2004



***Dedicated to
My Beloved Family: Parents, Wife Usha Thapa and Two Sons named
Ayush Bikram Thapa and Atish Bikram Thapa***



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Veterinary Science

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Chairman: Associate Professor Abdul Rahman Omar, Ph.D.

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This study was carried out to diagnose and characterize avian leucosis virus subgroup J (ALV-J) specific sequence isolated from poultry organs with myelocytic infiltration. Archived tissues with and without myelocytic infiltration were examined by PCR followed by sequencing. Four ALV-J sequences identified and named as; UPM/A6, UPM/A10, UPM/A17 and UPM/A18 were characterized based on sequence and phylogenetic analysis. Different diagnostic tests (PCR, ELISA and Virus isolation) for ALV-J were also studied and compared. A total of 21 poultry tissue samples were examined by PCR using primers (H5/H7) and 16 samples were found positive for ALV-J proviral DNA. However, only 5 samples were found positive for ALV-J viral RNA. Sequence analysis indicated that the 4 sequences have significant homology (>90%) when compared to ALV-J from UK and USA. However, based on phylogenetic analysis, the sequences of the ALV-J were close to Houghton Poultry Research Station -103 (HPRS-103). In addition 3, 10, 3 and 8 amino acid substitutions were observed in sequences; UPM/A6, UPM/A10, UPM/A17 and UPM/A18, respectively. All these substitutions

were unique and have not been reported before from other ALV-J isolates. The importance of these substitutions requires further study especially in order to determine whether the sequences resemble variant ALV-J from UK or USA.

Different diagnostic techniques were also compared for the detection of ALV-J in a normal broiler breeder flock as the first isolation of ALV-J was made from normal meat-type chickens. PCR was found to be more sensitive than ELISA and virus isolation. However, even though the chickens were gp85 antibody positive, all the samples examined showed negative result for ALV-J proviral DNA and virus isolation. In addition, no virus was isolated from archived tissue samples with myelocytic infiltration. The actual explanation for this finding is not clear, but several probable factors were presented and discussed. In conclusion, ALV-J proviral DNA were detected in tissue samples obtained from chickens with and without myelocytic infiltration. However, no virus was isolated. The importance of PCR in detecting proviral DNA and viral RNA from chickens with gp85 antibody requires careful examination due to the complex nature of ALV-J infection.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains Veterinar

**PENGESANAN VIRUS AVIAN LEUCOSIS VIRUS SUBGROUP J DALAM
SAMPEL TISU AYAM DAN PENCIRIAN MOLEKUL**

Oleh

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January 2004

Pengerusi: Profesor Madya Abdul Rahman Omar, Ph.D.

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Kajian ini dijalankan untuk mendiagnosis dan mencirikan jujukan spesifik avian leucosis virus subgroup J (ALV-J) daripada sampel yang dipencilkan dari organ ayam dengan infiltrasi myelosit. Tisu arkib yang berinfiltrasi dan tanpa infiltrasi myelosit diperiksa menerusi PCR, diikuti dengan penjujukan. Empat jujukan ALV-J, telah dikenalpasti dan dinamakan sebagai UPM/A6, UPM/A10, UPM/A17 dan UPM/A18 telah dicirikan berdasarkan analisis jujukan dan filogenetik. Ujian diagnosis berlainan (PCR, ELISA and Virus pemencilan) juga dikaji dan dibandingkan. Sejumlah 21 sampel yang telah diperiksa menerusi PCR dengan menggunakan pencetus (H5/H7) dan 16 sampel didapati positif bagi proviral DNA ALV-J. Walau bagaimanapun, hanya 5 sampel yang didapati positif bagi RNA virus ALV-J. Analisis jujukan menunjukkan bahawa 4 jujukan tersebut mempunyai kesamaan ketara (> 90%) apabila dibandingkan dengan ALV-J dari UK dan USA. Walau bagaimanapun, berdasarkan analisis filogenetik, jujukan ALV-J tersebut didapati lebih hampir kepada Houghton

Poultry Research Station-103 (HPRS-103). Sejumlah 3, 10, 3 dan 8 perubahan asid amino masing-masing diperhatikan pada jujukan UPM/A6, UPM/A10, UPM/A17 dan UPM/A18. Kesemua perubahan ini adalah unik dan belum pernah dilaporkan daripada isolat ALV-J lain. Kepentingan perubahan ini memerlukan kajian lanjut terutamanya untuk menentukan sama ada jujukan tersebut menyerupai ALV-J varian dari UK atau USA. Teknik diagnosis yang berlainan juga diperbandingkan untuk mengesan ALV-J di dalam ayam pembiak pedaging normal kerana pemencilan pertama ALV-J dibuat melalui ayam pedaging yang normal. PCR didapati lebih sensitif daripada ELISA dan pemencilan virus. Walau bagaimanapun, bagi ayam yang didapati positif dengan antibodi gp85, kesemua sampel yang diperiksa menunjukkan keputusan negatif bagi DNA provirus ALV-J dan pemencilan virus. Tambahan pula, tiada virus dapat dipencilkan daripada arkib sampel tisu yang bermyelosit. Huraian sebenar bagi keputusan ini adalah tidak jelas, tetapi beberapa faktor telah diketengahkan dan dibincangkan. Kesimpulannya, DNA provirus ALV-J dapat dikesan dalam sampel tisu yang didapati daripada ayam yang berinfiltrasi dan tanpa infiltrasi myelosit. Namun begitu, tiada virus yang dipencilkan. Kepentingan PCR dalam pengesanan DNA provirus dan RNA virus tersebut daripada ayam yang berantibodi gp85 memerlukan pemeriksaan yang teliti, memandangkan sifat jangkitan ALV-J yang kompleks.

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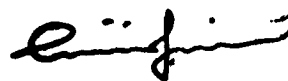
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations, which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or currently submitted for any other degree at UPM or other institutions.

Bala Ram Thapa

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Date: *9th feb. 2004*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENTS	PAGE
DEDICATION	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
ABSTRAK	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vii
APPROVAL SHEETS	x
DECLARATION	xii
LIST OF TABLES	xvii
LIST OF FIGURES	xix
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xxi
 CHAPTER	
I GENERAL INTRODUCTION	1
II LITERATURE REVIEW	6
Avian leucosis virus	6
Classification of ALSVs	7
Acutely transforming viruses	7
Slowly transforming viruses	8
Subgroups	8
Endogenous viruses	10
Defective viruses	10
Morphology	11
Physical and chemical properties	12
Avian leucosis virus subgroup- J	12
Origin	12
Host range	13
Pathogenicity	13
Genome	15
<i>Gag</i> and <i>Pol</i> gene	15
<i>Env</i> gene	16
Non-coding region	17
Nontranslated leader sequence	18
Antigenic variation	18
Epidemiology of avian leucosis virus	19
Distribution of ALV-J infection	19

	Prevalence of infection and disease	20
	Transmission	20
	Infection status	21
	Immunological response	22
	Economic impact	23
	Diagnosis	23
	Prevention and control	26
III	DETECTION OF AVIAN LEUCOSIS VIRUS SUBGROUP-J FROM TISSUE SAMPLES SHOWING MYELOCYTIC INFILTRATION	
	INTRODUCTION	29
	MATERIALS AND METHODS	29
	Experiment design	31
	Sample collection	31
	Histopathological examination	35
	DNA extraction from tissues samples	35
	Determination of DNA concentration and purity	36
	Primer design	37
	PCR amplification of proviral DNA	37
	RNA extraction from tissue sample	38
	Determination of RNA concentration and purity	39
	Deoxyribonuclease (DNase) treatment	40
	Reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction	40
	PCR amplification	40
	Agarose gel-electrophoresis	41
	RESULTS	41
	Histopathological examination	41
	Detection of proviral DNA and viral RNA of ALV-J	44
	DISCUSSION	51
IV	MOLECULAR CHARACTERIZATION OF AVIAN LEUCOSIS VIRUS SUBGROUP-J BASED ON THE PARTIAL SEQUENCE OF <i>ENV</i> GENE	
	INTRODUCTION	54

MATERIALS AND METHODS	56
Experimental design	56
Purification of PCR product	56
DNA sequencing	57
Sequencing reaction mixture	57
Purification by ethanol precipitation of the cycle sequencing product	58
Sequence analysis	59
Phylogenetic analysis	60
RESULTS	61
Sequence analysis	61
Percentage nucleotide identity	66
Analysis of amino acid substitution	66
Phylogenetic analysis	69
DISCUSSION	72
V COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF DIFFERENT TECHNIQUES IN DETECTING AVIAN LEUCOSIS VIRUS	75
INTRODUCTION	75
MATERIALS AND METHODS	77
Experimental design	77
Chickens	78
Enzyme linked immunosorbant assay (ELISA)	79
DNA extraction from blood, tissue and cloacal swab	79
Determination of DNA concentration and purity	80
PCR amplification of proviral DNA	80
RNA extraction	80
Determination of RNA concentration and purity	81
RT-PCR	81
Agarose gel electrophoresis	82
Virus isolation	82
Cell culture	82
Thawing and culturing of cells	82
Freezing of cells	83
Preparation of virus inoculum	84
Infection of DF1 cells	84
Indirect immunofluorescent antibody test (IFAT)	85

RESULTS	86
ELISA	86
PCR	88
Virus isolation	95
DISCUSSION	99
VI GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	102
REFERENCES	109
APPENDICES	119
BIODATA OF THE AUTHOR	144

LIST OF TABLES

TABLES	PAGE
Table 2.1	Phenotype of chicken embryo fibroblast (CEF) used for isolation and identification of ALVs from chicken. 24
Table 3.1	Tissue samples used for various virological methods and PCR detection of ALV-J specific sequences. 34
Table 3.2	List of tissue samples obtained from Regional Diagnostic Laboratory with myelocytic infiltration. 35
Table 3.3	Primer sequences used in PCR detection of ALV subgroups. 37
Table 3.4	Histopathological examination of various poultry tissues for myelocytic infiltration. 42
Table 3.5	Summary of positive samples for proviral DNA and viral RNA for subgroups J, A and E. 45
Table 4.1	ALV-J sequences used for comparison and phylogenetic analysis. 60
Table 4.2	Comparison of amino acid substitutions at different positions between the Malaysian ALV-J sequences and published ALV-J isolates. 68
Table 4.3	Genetic distances based on nucleotide sequence: estimated number of substitutions per 100 bases by Kimura 2-parameter (Kimura, 1980). 70
Table 4.4	Genetic distances based on amino acid sequence: estimated number of substitutions per 100 amino acids by Kimura 2-parameter (Kimura, 1980). 71
Table 5.1	List of samples collected from broilers used for different tests. 78
Table 5.2	Four immunologically distinct groups of birds based on direct and indirect ELISA. 79
Table 5.3	Serological profiles of broiler breeder chickens for ALV. 87
Table 5.4	Percentage of chicken grouping based on their immunological status. 87

Table 5.5	Comparison between DNA PCR and ELISA for detection of ALV subgroup J and A.	88
Table 5.6	PCR detection of proviral ALV subgroups J and A in tissues, blood and cloacal swabs of broiler breeder chickens in group A (p27+/gp85+).	91
Table 5.7	PCR detection and IFAT of ALV-J after inoculation of PCR positive samples into DF1 cells.	95

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURES	PAGE
Figure 2.1 The retrovirus virion.	11
Figure 2.2 The structure of the 7.8 kb genome of HPRS-103.	15
Figure 3.1 Infiltration of eosinophilic myelocytes in lung of chicken sample A21.	43
Figure 3.2 Detection of proviral DNA (expected PCR product ~550) for subgroup J ALV from poultry tissue samples.	46
Figure 3.3 RT-PCR detection of viral RNA (expected PCR product ~550bp) specific for subgroup J from tissue with myelocytes infiltration.	47
Figure 3.4 No detection of proviral DNA (expected PCR product of ~550 bp) from DNase-treated RNA for subgroup J ALV.	48
Figure 3.5 Detection of proviral DNA (expected PCR product ~250bp) of endogenous retrovirus subgroup E.	49
Figure 3.6 Detection of proviral DNA (expected PCR product ~250bp) for subgroup A ALV.	50
Figure 4.1 ALV-J specific nucleotide sequences from position 5305 to 5769.	62
Figure 4.2 Alignment of deduced amino acids (155 in length) of Malaysian ALV-J specific sequences with those of other published sequences.	65
Figure 5.1 Absence of proviral subgroup J DNA (expected PCR product ~550 bp) in blood of four immunological distinct groups (A, B, C and D) determined based on ELISA.	89
Figure 5.2 Detection of proviral subgroup A DNA (expected PCR product ~229bp) from blood of four immunological distinct groups (A, B, C and D) determined based on ELISA.	90
Figure 5.3 Detection of proviral DNA (expected PCR product ~229bp) from blood, cloacal swab and tissue samples for subgroup A ALV.	92

Figure 5.4	Abscence of proviral DNA (expected PCR product ~550 bp) from blood, cloacal swab and tissue samples for subgroup J ALV.	93
Figure 5.5	Abscence of viral RNA by RT-PCR (expected product ~200 bp) for subgroup A from cloacal swab. Based on the primer PA1 and PA2 (Pham <i>et al.</i> , 1999) the size of the amplified product is 229 bp.	94
Figure 5.6	Detection of proviral DNA (expected PCR product of ~550bp) for subgroup J in A17 sample only after first passage.	96
Figure 5.7	Abscence of proviral DNA (expected PCR product ~200 bp) for subgroup A and (~550 bp) for subgroup J from DF1 cell culture inoculated with cloacal swab samples and blood plasma samples.	97
Figure 5.8	Indirect immunofluorescence antibody test using monoclonal antibody against gp85 domain of env protein of ALV subgroup J.	98

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

%	percentage
μ	micro (10 ⁻⁶ x)
μg	microgram
μl	microlitre
A	adenine (nucleotide)
A	Alanine
A-	without neutralizing antibody
A+	with neutralizing antibody
ab	antibody
AEV	avian erythroblastosis virus
ag	antigen
ALSV(s)	avian leucosis sarcoma virus (es)
ALV (s)	avian leucosis virus (es)
AMV	avian myeloblastosis virus
AMV-RT	avian myeloblastosis virus reverse transcriptase
ATCC	American Type Culture Collection
BLAST	Basic Local Alignment Search Tool
Bp	base pair
C	cysteine
C	cytosine (nucleotide)
CAV	chicken anaemia virus
cDNA	complementary DNA
CEF	chicken embryo fibroblast
Cl	chloroform isoamylalcohol
cm	centimeter
cm ²	centimeter square
cm ³	centimeter cube
C-myc	cellular oncogene
CO ₂	carbon dioxide
COFAL	compliment fixation test for avian leucosis virus
CPE	cytopathic effect
CRD	chronic respiratory disease
D	aspartic acid
Da	Dalton
DDBJ	DNA Data Bank of Japan
DEPC	diethyl pyrocarbonate
DMEM	Dulbecco's Modified Eagle's Medium
DMSO	dimethylsulfoxide
DNA	deoxyribonucleic acids
dNTP	deoxyribonucleotides
DR	direct repeat
DTT	dithiothretol
E	glutamic acid
EAV	endogenous avian virus
EAV-HP	endogenous avian retrovirus named Houghton Poultry
ed (s)	editor(s)
EDTA	ethylene diamine tetra acetic acid



ELISA	enzyme-linked immunosorbant assay
ELL	East Lansing Line
EMBL	European Molecular Biology Laboratory
<i>env</i>	envelope gene
<i>ev</i>	endogenous virus
F	phenylalanine
FBS	fetal bovine serum
FITC	fluorescein isothiocyanate
G	glycine
g	gravity
G	guanidine (nucleotide)
<i>gag</i>	group-specific antigen gene
GCG	genetic computer group
gm	gram
gp37	glycoprotein 37 kDa protein
gp85	glycoprotein 85 kDa protein
GS	group specific
GSA	group specific antigen
H E	Haematoxin and Eosin
H	histidine
HPRS	Houghton Poultry Research Station
hr	heterogeneous region
I	isoleucine
IBS	Institute of Bioscience
id	identification
IFAT	Indirect immunofluorescent antibody test
Ig G	Immunoglobulin G
K	lysine
kbp	kilobase (pair)
KCl	Potassium chloride
kDa	kilodalton
KH ₂ PO ₄	potassium dihydrogen phosphate
L	leucine
l	litre
LL	lymphoid leucosis
LPDV	lymphoproliferative disease virus
LTR	long terminal repeat
M	methionine
M	Molar
M.W.	molecular weight
MC 29	avian myelocytomatosis virus MC 29
mg	milligram
MgCl ₂	magnesium chloride
MH2	avian myelocytomatosis and carcinoma virus MH2
min	minute
ml	millilitre
ML	myeloid leucosis
mM	millimolar
mm ³	milimeter cube
mRNA	messenger RNA

MV29	myeloblastosis virus 29
N	asparagine
Na ₂ HPO ₄	di-sodium hydrogen phosphate anhydrous
NaOAc	sodium acetate
NDV	Newcastle disease virus
ng	nanogram
NJ	Neighbor-Joining
nm	nanometer
no.	number
NP	nonproducer
nr	non-redundant
nt	nucleotide
O.D.	optical density
°C	degree celcius
ORF	open reading frame
P	proline
p.p.	pages
p27	protein 27
PBS	phosphate buffered saline
PCI	phenol:chloroform:isoamylalcohol
PCR	Polymerase Chain Reaction
PDB	Protein Data Bank
pg	picogram
PM	phenotypic mixing
pmole	picomole
pol	polymerase
pp ⁶⁰	phosphoprotein 60 kilodalton
PRC	Prague subgroup C
Q	glutamine
QC-RT-PCR	Quantitative competitive reverse transcriptase Polymerase Chain Reaction
R	arginine
RAV-1	Rous-associated virus subgroup A
RAV-2	Rous-associated virus subgroup B
rc	replication-competent
rd	replication-defective
Ref. no.	reference number
REV	reticuloendothelial virus
RIF	resistance inducing factor
RNA	ribonucleic acid
rpm	revolution per minute
RSV	Rous sarcoma virus
RT	reverse transcriptase
RT	room temperature
rTM	redundant transmembrane
RT-PCR	reverse transcriptase polymerase chain reaction
S-	non-shedder
S	serine
S+	shedder
SDS	sodium dodecylsulphate

Sec	second (time)
<i>src</i>	viral oncogene
ss	single-stranded
SU	surface protein
T	threonine
T	thymine (nucleotide)
TBE Buffer	tris base EDTA Buffer
TCID	tissue culture infectious dose
TCIU	tissue culture infectious unit
TM37	transmembrane 37k Da protein
TMB	3,3',5'-tetramethyl-benzidine
U	unit
UK	United Kingdom
UPM	Universiti Putra Malaysia
USA	United States of America
UV	ultraviolet
<i>V- onc</i>	viral oncogene
v-	no viremia
V	valine
V/V	volume/volume
<i>V-erb</i>	viral erb oncogene
<i>V-myc</i>	viral myc oncogene
VN	virus neutralization
vr	variable region
vIBDV	very virulent infectious bursal disease virus
W	tryptophan
W/V	weight/volume
Y	tyrosine

CHAPTER I

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Avian leucosis virus subgroup J (ALV-J) is an economically important pathogen of meat-type bird. ALV-J causes serious economic losses in poultry industry since significant growth suppression of an average 6-11% (Landman *et al.*, 2002) and mortality due to myeloid leucosis and related tumours was 22% (Witter *et al.*, 2000), which further leads to carcass condemnation. The virus was first reported in United Kingdom in 1989 (Payne *et al.*, 1991a, 1991b and Payne, 1992). Since then it has been reported from all over the world, which include USA (Smith *et al.*, 1998a), South America (Buscaglia *et al.*, 2000), Central America (Neuman *et al.*, 2000), Africa (Aly, 2000), Middle East (Banet *et al.*, 2000), Japan (Nakamura *et al.*, 2000), Australia (Bagust, 2000), Switzerland (Wunderwald *et al.*, 2001), the Netherlands (Landman *et al.*, 2002), Korea (Sung *et al.*, 2002a), Taiwan (Wang and Juan, 2002), Malaysia (Omar *et al.*, 2002) and China (Xu B. *et al.*, 2003).

The main clinical abnormality associated with ALV-J is myeloid leucosis (ML), which is characterized by multiple myelocytomas on the bone surfaces, commonly evident on the inner sternum, ribs and enlargement of visceral organs due to infiltration of myelocytes. The myelocytes are large round immature granulocytes with many eosinophilic granules in the cytoplasm normally found in bone marrow but detected in blood and other organs during certain diseases (Payne *et al.*, 1992b). However, histiocytic sarcomatosis, pulmonary sarcoma,

